

# Greater Peoria Leadership Council (GPLC)

## Sprint Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)

### Fiscal Year 2025 Grant Initiative – Build a Vibrant Regional Core

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## About the Greater Peoria Leadership Council

The Greater Peoria Leadership Council (GPLC) was formed as a collective of regional business and civic leaders who recognized that lasting transformation requires more than individual action—it demands a unified voice. Representing the business community, the GPLC advances the Greater Peoria region through coordinated, intentional leadership and shared responsibility.

### Current Strategic Focus Areas (2025)

Under the umbrella of Choose Greater Peoria, the GPLC began with two foundational priorities—attracting talent and promoting unified regional identity—and has added a third strategic focus as these priorities continue to evolve:

- Attracting & Retaining Talent - Building a connected hiring ecosystem that positions Peoria as a destination for career growth.
- Promoting a Unified Regional Identity - Creating consistent, authentic messaging so communities, businesses, and leaders speak with one voice.
- Building a Vibrant Regional Core - Creating a bustling, energetic heart of Greater Peoria through strategic placemaking, beautification, and economic vibrancy initiatives that celebrate our unique character while attracting businesses, residents, workers, and visitors.

### Grant Program as Strategic Investment

The 2025 grant program represents our commitment to building a vibrant regional core—a pilot initiative to amplify regional core development work already underway by Community Development Organizations and other stakeholders. With an initial investment of \$775,000, this program creates greater collective impact through community-led, strategically aligned projects with measurable results.

### Defining Our Regional Core

Our "regional core" includes six key districts: The Levee District (East Peoria's commercial center), The Riverfront (festivals and culture), The Warehouse District (creative hub), The Central Business District (downtown core), The Med-Tech Hub (healthcare and education), and The Main Street Corridor (historic connector to Bradley University).

## Program Overview

The Greater Peoria Leadership Council invites applications for **Sprint Grants** designed to create rapid, visible impact in the Greater Peoria Regional Core within 3-6 months. Sprint Grants support quick-implementation projects that enhance regional core beautification, programming, and hospitality while building momentum for longer-term regional development.

**Total Available Sprint Funding:** \$151,000

**Number of Awards:** 3-4 grants (approximately)

**Anticipated Average Award:** \$37,750

**Application Deadline:** September 1, 2025

**Project Duration:** 3-6 months

**Application Frequency:** Semi-annually (2 cycles per year/anticipated spring 2026 release)

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## Grant Thresholds

Sprint Grant applications which fall into the Major Impact Threshold (greater than \$25,000) are subject to additional eligibility requirements and required documentation.

### Sprint - Quick Impact Threshold

- **Funding Range:** \$5,000 - \$25,000
- **Focus:** Accessible, rapid implementation projects
- **Overhead Maximum:** 10%

### Sprint - Major Impact Threshold

- **Funding Range:** \$25,001 - \$50,000
  - **Focus:** Enhanced capacity projects with maximum sprint value
  - **Overhead Maximum:** 10%
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## 2025 Focus Areas

All Sprint Grant projects must align with one or more of the following Regional Core enhancement priorities. The following focus area ideas are examples but are not limited to:

## **Regional Core (RC) Beautification**

- Window clings in empty storefronts
- Streetscape improvements: flowers, lighting, seating in RC areas
- Visual enhancements that create immediate positive impact

## **Regional Core (RC) Programming**

- Pop-up support for existing Regional Core planned events
- Programming enhancements that attract visitors and activity
- Creative activations that utilize existing Regional Core infrastructure

## **Regional Core (RC) Hospitality**

- Street hospitality teams or local concierge ambassadors
- Visitor experience improvements
- Initiatives supporting positive Regional Core experiences during events

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# **Eligibility Requirements**

## **All Sprint Grant Applications**

### **Eligible Organizations:**

- 501(c)(3) organizations
- Municipal departments/agencies
- Peoria and East Peoria public schools/park districts
- GPLC Partner Community Development Organizations (CDOs)

### **Requirements:**

- Minimum 1 year of operations
- Must serve Greater Peoria region with demonstrated community benefit
- Current on required state & federal filings, no significant financial violations

## **Additional Eligibility Requirements**

### **For Major Impact Threshold (\$25,001 - \$50,000) only:**

- Annual organizational budget of at least \$75,000 OR demonstrated management of projects >\$10,000
- Track record of at least one previous project with budget >\$10,000 successfully implemented

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## Required Documentation

### All Sprint Applicants:

- IRS determination letter (or official letterhead documentation for municipal related entities)
- Simple project budget using GPLC template
- Previous year's year-end financial statements (board-approved)
- Current year organizational budget (year-to-date)

### Additional Documentation Requirements

#### For Major Impact Threshold (\$25,001 - \$50,000) Applicants Only:

- Brief organizational description including staff capacity for project related activities (1 page maximum)
  - Description of previous successful project with budget >\$10,000
  - Detailed project timeline with milestones
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## Allowable Costs

### Direct Program Costs (*Primary Focus*)

- Materials and supplies directly related to project activities
- Event and programming costs: venue rental, speaker fees, participant materials
- Marketing and outreach: project-specific promotional materials
- Local travel directly related to project implementation
- Participant support: refreshments, materials, accessibility accommodations

### Project Personnel (*Limited*)

- Staff allocated to project outcomes (with time tracking)
- Hourly or project-based professional services
- Short-term personnel hired specifically for project activities

### Project Equipment (*Limited*)

- Equipment and technology essential for project delivery
- Equipment purchased remains with implementing organization
- Equipment expenses are classified based on the organization's capitalization threshold – items above this threshold are recognized as assets and depreciated over time

## Project Overhead

- **Maximum 10%** for project administration, permits, financial tracking, evaluation, compliance, and partnership coordination

## Restricted Categories

- **General organizational operating expenses unrelated to project**
  - **Project staff benefits:** Health insurance, retirement contributions, other standard benefits
  - **Equipment not directly essential to project delivery**
  - **Capital improvements or organizational infrastructure**
  - **Fundraising or development activities**
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## Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be scored on a 5-point scale across the following weighted criteria. See addendum for specific responses required.

Criterion	Weight	Description
<b>Regional Alignment</b>	10%	Connection to regional development and GPLC strategic priorities
<b>Amplification Factor</b>	15%	Resource multiplication potential and building on existing investments
<b>Measurable Impact</b>	25%	Quantifiable targets for increased activity and economic impact
<b>Vibrant Place Development</b>	35%	Physical, social, and cultural enhancement of place quality
<b>Execution Strength</b>	15%	Organizational capacity and project feasibility

## Funding Recommendation Thresholds:

- 4.0-5.0: Strong Funding Potential
- 3.5-3.9: Fundable
- 3.0-3.4: Consider Funding
- 2.5-2.9: Recommend Revision and Resubmission
- Below 2.5: Do Not Fund

## Bonus Points (up to 0.75 additional points for projects scoring 3.0+):

- Proven innovation or successful pilot approaches
- Exceptional community engagement with documented commitments

- Strong data collection plans contributing to regional learning

**Note:** All grant scores act as guides for the Grant Committee. The committee reserves the right to prioritize and make funding recommendations to the GPLC Executive Committee as they deem is in the best interest of the GPLC and its goals. Annual grant funding will be based on funds available and overall program mix.

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## Application Process

### Timeline

- **RFP Release:** July 24, 2025
- **Application Deadline:** September 1, 2025 at 11:59 pm Eastern
- **Review Period:** September 2025
- **Recipients Notified:** October 2025
- **Project Period:** November 2025 - April 2026 (*targeted, though open to adjustments for seasonality or community calendar considerations*)

### How to Apply

1. Complete RFP required responses using GPLC online portal at [www.choosegreaterpeoria.org/gplc](http://www.choosegreaterpeoria.org/gplc)
2. Upload all required documentation with application

### Support Available

- Basic application assistance
  - Budget template resources
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## Grant Management Requirements

Grant award recipients will be notified by GPLC Grant Operations. Grant awards are formalized through a signed grant agreement with GPLC prior to funding distribution.

**Advance Restricted Funding:** GPLC will provide grant funds in advance rather than through reimbursement. All funds remain restricted to approved activities and require financial tracking capability for compliance.

### Reporting

- **Final Report:** Due 30 days after project completion

## Financial Management

- Detailed budget categories with specific allocation
- Time and effort reporting for personnel costs
- Receipt documentation for all purchases
- Competitive procurement documentation required for equipment >\$10,000

## Pre-Approval Required

- Budget modifications >10% between categories
  - Equipment/Technology Over \$10,000: Requires GPLC pre-approval with documented competitive procurement process
  - Timeline changes affecting costs
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## Special Considerations

### Geographical Focus

- **Regional Core** preferred for vibrancy and place-building effectiveness
- **Cross-river coordination** preferred for maximum impact and connectivity

### Innovation and Impact

- **Creative solutions** to connectivity and coordination challenges encouraged
  - **Measurable outcomes** that demonstrate increased community engagement
  - **Scalable approaches** that can be replicated or expanded
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## Contact Information

### Grant Operations Team

Greater Peoria Leadership Council

Kristin Zika

[kzika@greater-peoria.org](mailto:kzika@greater-peoria.org)

Director of Operations & Grant Management

### Questions?

- Email grant operations team for eligibility clarification and general submission support
- Applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM on September 1, 2025. Late applications will not be considered.

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# Addendum: RFP Specific Responses Required

## SECTION A: BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION

**A1. Project Title** *(25 words maximum)*

**A2. Requested Amount**

☐ Quick Impact Threshold: \$5,000 - \$25,000 ☐ Major Impact Threshold: \$25,001 - \$50,000

**A3. Project Duration** *(3-6 months)* Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**A4. Primary Focus Area** *(Check all that apply)*

☐ Regional Core Beautification ☐ Regional Core Programming ☐ Regional Core Hospitality

**A5. Target Regional Core District(s)** *(Check all that apply)*

☐ Levee District (East Peoria) ☐ Riverfront ☐ Warehouse District ☐ Central Business District ☐ Med-Tech Hub ☐ Main Street Corridor

**A6. Organization Eligibility** *(Check one)*

☐ 501(c)(3) organization ☐ Municipal department/agency  
☐ Peoria/East Peoria public school/park district ☐ GPLC Partner CDO

**A7. Project Summary** *(100 words maximum)* Provide a clear, concise description of your project and its primary activities.

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## SECTION B: REGIONAL ALIGNMENT (10% of score)

**B1. Regional Core Impact** *(150 words maximum)* How will this project specifically benefit the Greater Peoria Regional Core? Address cross-river coordination if applicable.

**B2. Alignment with GPLC Priorities** *(100 words maximum)* How does this project support GPLC's strategic focus areas: attracting talent, promoting unified regional identity, and/or building a vibrant regional core?

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## SECTION C: MEASURABLE IMPACT (25% of score)

**C1. Current Baseline** *(100 words maximum)*

**Please describe the current conditions in your project area that demonstrate the need for this grant. Your baseline should help us understand what exists now and why your project is needed. Consider describing:**

- Current activity levels (estimated daily foot traffic, typical event attendance)
- Present business environment (number of active businesses, general vacancy observations)
- Existing physical state (infrastructure condition, aesthetic qualities, accessibility, safety)
- Existing community connections (current partnerships, resident engagement, visitor patterns)



- **Please cite data sources used:** Simple observation, existing reports, basic counts, community feedback, local business input

**C2. Quantifiable Target Outcomes: Choose Your Top Metrics** (*Complete only those most relevant to your project*)

**Based on your project design and implementation plan, what measurable outcomes do you anticipate achieving? Please provide your projected targets for the metrics most applicable to your project.**

- ☐ **Participation:** Expected participants/attendees: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ **Activity Increase:** Foot traffic increase: \_\_\_\_\_ % OR \_\_\_\_\_ additional people
- ☐ **Engagement:** New visitors to Regional Core you expect to attract: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ **Business Impact:** Number of businesses participating/benefiting from project: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ **Community Sentiment:** Positive community feedback target: \_\_\_\_\_ % positive responses OR \_\_\_\_\_ positive testimonials
- ☐ **Media/Visibility:** Social media reach/media coverage target: \_\_\_\_\_

**C3. Simple Project Outcomes Measurement Plan aligned to your chosen metrics** (*75 words maximum*)

**Please describe how you will track and document the changes your project creates. Your measurement plan should be simple and realistic for your organization to implement using basic tools and existing resources.**

- Photos (before/during/after)
- Simple counts (attendees, participants, businesses engaged)
- Basic surveys (1-2 questions via text/email)
- Social media metrics (posts, engagement, reach)
- **Timeline:** When will you collect data? (start, midpoint, end)

**C4. Success Story** (*50 words maximum*)

**In your own words, what will success look like for your project? Highlight the measurable outcomes you expect from this project. Describe the visible change you expect to create and how the community will experience the difference your project makes.**

**SECTION D: VIBRANT PLACE DEVELOPMENT (35% of score)**

**D1. Place Quality Enhancement** (*150 words maximum*) How will this project improve the physical environment, social connections, community character, or overall vibrancy of the targeted area?

**D2. Community Engagement Strategy** (*100 words maximum*) How will you engage local residents, businesses, or visitors? What partnerships will enhance the project's impact?

**SECTION E: EXECUTION STRENGTH (15% of score)**

**E1. Organizational Capacity** (*100 words maximum*) Briefly describe your organization's experience with similar projects and your team's qualifications for this work.

**E2. Project Timeline** (*List 3-5 key milestones with dates*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION F: AMPLIFICATION (15% of score)

**F1. Resource Amplification** (100 words maximum) What additional resources (funding, volunteers, partnerships, in-kind support) will this grant leverage? Include dollar amounts and partner commitments.

**F2. Catalyst Effect** (100 words maximum) How might this project inspire additional initiatives or motivate others to invest in similar Regional Core improvements?

**F3. Sustainability** (75 words maximum) How will positive impacts continue after the grant period ends? How will initial success attract additional resources or support?

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## SECTION G: BUDGET SUMMARY

### G1. Total Project Budget

- GPLC Grant Request: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Funding Sources: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- In-Kind Contributions: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- **Total Project Value:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### G2. Budget Categories (Upload GPLC Sprint Grant Budget Template)

- Direct Program Costs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Project Personnel: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Project Equipment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Project Overhead (max 10%): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**G3. Budget Narrative:** Include brief explanations for major budget categories - Direct Program Costs, Project Personnel, Project Equipment, and Overhead (100 words maximum)

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST**

### **All Sprint Grant Applications**

☐ IRS determination letter (or official letterhead for municipal entities) ☐ Sprint Grant Budget using GPLC template ☐ Previous year's year-end financial statements (board-approved) ☐ Current year organizational budget (year-to-date)

### **Additional Documentation Requirements for Major Impact Threshold (\$25,001 - \$50,000)**

☐ Brief organizational description including staff capacity for project activities (1 page maximum) ☐ Description of previous successful project with budget >\$10,000 ☐ Detailed project timeline with milestones